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Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 00854
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ACTION: POLEC
INFO: DCM POLM AMB

DISSEMINATION: POLX
CHARGE: PROG

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9919
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 3839
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 7258

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000854

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/19/2019
TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: COUNTER PIRACY: TURKEY READY TO CONTRIBUTE MORE
NAVAL ASSETS TO NATO FORCE, OPPOSES LOWERING THE BAR FOR
ENTRY INTO CONTACT GROUP

REF: A. STATE 58579
[1](#)B. STATE 58992

Classified By: Pol Mil Counselor Anthony Godfrey for reason 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) Turkey strongly supports NATO's Operation Ocean Shield and pledged a Turkish naval vessel to deploy together with the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 to the region. That was the message we received loud and clear from Cagatay Erciyes, head of the MFA's Maritime Affairs Section and Turker Ari, head of the MFA's NATO section. Ari was quick to point out that the new contribution would be in addition to the Turkish frigate already deployed to the region, currently serving as the flagship of CTF-151.

[1](#)2. (C) Turkey shares our opposition to an international piracy court, but would not dismiss out of hand a proposal to create some sort of regional court. We suggested that the arguments against an international court were just as valid against a regional court. Ari agreed, but explained that Turkey did not want to appear to be rejecting an idea put forward by another member of the Contact Group before it had been properly aired. He did not expect the idea of a regional court to succeed.

[1](#)3. (C) We took the opportunity to air the idea of "moving beyond membership" in the Contact Group. Erciyes said that Turkey would be willing to give such ideas a fair hearing, but would look for a substantive debate on a formal proposal. While Turkey's "red line" against Cyprus membership remained in place, Erciyes said the more relevant issue was force contribution. He expected the fight against piracy to last for much longer than a few months. The cost of contributing naval vessels was high. If we lowered the bar to allow lesser contributions for participation in the Contact Group, we should expect states which are currently providing naval forces to opt for less costly contributions. Turkey's view was that states capable of contributing forces should not be given the option of being free riders.

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